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There are so many things that can discourage us as teachers and a lot of the advice we're given for how to deal with it is not super helpful, but praise the Lord in Christ, we can have real hope. can face the day with hope and experience supernatural joy and supernatural peace, even when things are really hard. Welcome back to the Teach for the Heart podcast, where we tackle teaching challenges from a biblical perspective. Why are we here?

because we don't believe that our spiritual walk and teaching profession should exist in two separate domains. Rather, the hope we have in Christ should change how we approach everything, not just at home, but at school as well. So join us as we explore both the spiritual and practical sides of key teaching challenges, integrating them together so we can succeed at teaching, glorify God, and make a lasting difference in our students' hearts and lives. This episode is brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. So I don't have to tell you that

Teaching is not easy, and it's honestly never been easy, but in the last few years you've experienced it, it has gotten so much more difficult. So I'm wondering, can you relate to any of these situations that so many teachers are facing? Maybe you have so many kids with so many needs that it feels impossible to meet them all. You probably have students that aren't interested in learning, yet you're still being judged by test scores and graduation rates.

Maybe you are experiencing low teacher morale and negativity all around you. Perhaps your workload feels never ending and just more and more being piled on. Or there's unrealistic expectations that you could never ever meet or never ever complete everything that you're asked to do. You might feel so tired and exhausted, you're not sure you can keep going. You might be dealing with parents that are unkind and demanding or feel like your voice is lost when you try to bring concerns to administration.

you might feel like you're struggling with feelings of not being good enough or ineffective because of the way things are going in your classroom because of all these things. So let me tell you this, if even one of those resonated with you, that can be really discouraging. But if you combine a few of these and some of the other things you're facing, mean, things can look really bleak really fast. You might find yourself feeling discouraged, frustrated or defeated.

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Not looking forward to work, but feeling anxious and stressed, maybe even dreading, walking in the classroom. Some of you might even be thinking about quitting on a regular basis. You might find yourself losing patience with students, struggling to bring enthusiasm to your teaching. You might come home from work frustrated and feel like you have nothing left to give to your family. Perhaps you know that trusting God is important and you want to trust him and feel at peace. But maybe these things almost feel cliché or impossible.

and instead you find yourself struggling with anxiety and worry. So what is the answer? What is going to renew our hope and help us stop feeling defeated? Well, I wanna start by talking about what is not going to work, and then we'll talk about

what is the real answer. So first of all, two things, there's a lot more, but two things I wanna talk about today that aren't gonna work. First one is self-care.

I've talked to so many teachers that are like, am sick of being told to practice self care, as if that's going to solve everything. There's a few reasons, and maybe you resonate with some of these, why teachers are frustrated with self care and why it doesn't really work. First problem is that you might not have the time or the energy for it. So many teachers are saying, I am so tired of being told, take time for myself, by the people who are piling on so much work, they don't have time to take care of myself.

So it might be a very real struggle. You might feel like I don't have time for it. I don't have energy. I don't have energy for it at the end of the day. But even if you say, no, I'm going to prioritize it. I'm going to make time for self care. I'm going to make it happen. Things like taking deep breaths, going for a walk, taking a nap or a bubble bath. These can be refreshing. And I'm not at all. Please hear me. I'm not telling you don't practice self care, but

The thing is, self-care is not going to solve these bigger problems. It's a temporary help. It can help when we're struggling, give us a little bit of a pick-me-up, but it's not going to really address the real issues underneath. It's kind of like, in some cases, if you're really, struggling, it can be like putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound. It's gonna stop a little bleeding, but it's not addressing the real issue.

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Okay, does that make sense? So once again, hear me, I'm not telling you don't practice self care, but I'm saying just practicing self care is sometimes put out as, that's all you gotta do and then you're good to go. And that's not it. We're missing some bigger things here if that's all we're doing. So we're not just gonna say practice self care. Second thing though, is waiting for circumstances to change. So once again, this is something that will not work. And I think this one can be tempting.

So this one sounds like if my admin would just support us, I wouldn't be so frustrated. Or if my students actually wanted to learn, I'd be able to enjoy teaching. So whenever we say if, insert whatever you want to change, then I would be happier, more fulfilled, more calm. I wouldn't be daydreaming about quitting, whatever it is. Then we are trusting in our circumstance. And we are putting ourselves at the mercy of our circumstances. And this is not a good approach because it leaves us stuck.

It leaves us waiting for things to change so that we can feel better. And it makes our hope and our joy and our peace dependent on our circumstances. So if our circumstances aren't going well, then we're stuck, we're miserable, and we're defeated until something changes, because we're just kind of a victim of that and waiting around until something changes. But thankfully, this isn't what God says. I love this quote, and I find it so impactful. God says,

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, right? So think about this. Joy is a fruit of the

Spirit, not a fruit of our circumstances. Same thing with hope. Hope is a fruit of the Spirit, not a fruit of our circumstances. sorry. Hope is actually not a fruit of the Spirit. Hope, though, is something that comes from God. Peace is what I meant to say. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, not a fruit of our circumstances. So what do we mean by that? We mean that these

things, joy, peace, and yes, also hope. They come from God and we can experience them even when things are really, really crazy. So I really believe the answer to our frustrations and discouragement, it's not gonna be found just in self care. It's also not gonna be found in waiting around hoping our school will change or our admin will make a different decision. It's found in a source that is so much greater than ourselves. It comes from God.

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And the amazing truth is that if you are in Christ, He is able to give you peace and joy no matter what. So that means if He has called you to teach and if you're teaching right now, then that's where He has you for now. Even if it's only for now, that is where He has you. He is able to give you peace and joy in that. And it's supernatural. This supernatural peace and joy comes from God. It doesn't come from ourselves. And when we are living in that reality,

We are able to be calm even when things are crazy. We're able to have hope even when things look bleak. And we don't have to be worried even when we don't know what's going to happen. Now, as I'm saying that, some of you might, you might have a lot of different reactions to this. If you're anything like me, you maybe you've experienced this at different times in your life. But then there's other seasons where you don't.

And I do think that as Christians, this is something that can ebb and flow because at certain times we are not really connected to that joy and peace. We're not experiencing it. We are really, really stressed about all the things happening. And then other times we are. So what makes the difference? I think there are some key things that need to happen. I think first of all, we need to know God. We need to be His child. We need to be trusting God with what He's doing. And then we need to rely on God.

to be able to do what we're doing. So let me talk about each of these one by one. First of all, we have to know God. We have to be His child, okay? So we have to understand that, understand the gospel and be His child. So for just a minute, let me make sure that we're on the same page here, okay? So we by ourselves are not in good shape. We are sinners, we are separated from God, but God sent Jesus to die for us.

And when we trust in Him, He becomes our Father and He takes our sin and He gives us His righteousness. There's so much more I would like to say to that. We can maybe link to a resource if you're like, I've never heard this before. We can link to a resource at teachfortheheart.com/slash/335. That'll go into that in more detail. But this is so important to recognize that when we are in Christ, when we accept Him and we are His child,

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then he is our father, okay? That is the relationship that we have with him and he is caring for us, he is working in our lives. And that we have to start there though, okay? So once again, if you're like, I don't know if I'm God's child, go to [teachfortheheart.com slash 335](http://teachfortheheart.com/slash/335), we will link to kind of a more in-depth explanation of what that actually means. But if you are his child, understanding that is so important and starting from that recognition that I am his child, he is my father. Number two.

After that, then we need to trust God with what he is doing. And this matters so much and it can be so easy. Sometimes we say we trust God, but we're not actually doing it in the moment, right? We might say, yes, I trust God, but I haven't actually taken that belief and applied it to my present reality. Okay. It's so important to actually sit down and think that through, pray it through and actually choose to trust God.

Because when we are actively trusting that the God who is our Father and who loves us is in control over every situation I'm facing, including whatever one is bothering me right now, and that he's working in it and through it for good, then I actually don't have to worry. I can have hope, even if things seem really bleak. My anxiety can calm, and I can face even challenging days with hope and joy and peace.

because I know God is with us and I know that he cares and that he's working for my good. And so I can trust him. And this really just totally changes my outlook. So number one, knowing God. Number two, trusting God with what he's doing. Number three, relying on God to be able to do what I'm doing. So this goes beyond just trusting that he's at work. It's also realizing I'm not on my own.

And I shouldn't be trying to do this on my own, whatever I'm facing, whether it's disruptive students or interpersonal issues or just a broken system, whatever I'm facing, I'm not on my own. I don't have to face it in my own strength. I don't have to step in that classroom and teach or try to discipline in my own strength. I have God with me and I need to rely on him every single day for wisdom in navigating situations, for energy when I'm exhausted.

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for patience when I'm about to lose it, for love when I'm annoyed and frustrated, for creativity to solve issues or find a better way to teach something or to motivate my students or whatever it is I need. So this is just so, so key, right? Knowing God, trusting Him and relying on Him. And that might sound like, Linda, does that really make that big of a difference?

But if you've been a Christian long, and if you've experienced this at all, you would say, yes, it really, really does. And it's because it's supernatural. As God's children, He promises to help us. And so we're tapping into His strength, His supernatural ability to work in our hearts through the Spirit. Here's a few verses that help kind of show that God, yes, God is ready and willing and wants to help us. So James 1.5 talks specifically about wisdom when we don't know what to do.

says, any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without

reproach and it will be given him. Second Peter 1.3, his divine power has given to us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his glory and goodness. So he will give us what we need. Second Corinthians 9.8, and God is able to make every grace overflow to you so that in every way, always having everything you need,

You may excel in every good work. So the bottom line is when we are his child, we are trusting in him and relying on him, our outlook changes, even if our circumstances are exactly the same. We are able to face the day with hope because we know he's in control and he's with us. We don't have to feel defeated because we know he's on our side. And we can have joy even when things are difficult because he is producing that fruit in us.

despite our circumstances. Now, I hope you're capturing a glimpse or being reminded of these truths that you might not be applying to your current situation. But sometimes, trusting God and relying on him is so easy to say, but hard to do. Sometimes it almost feels cliché, right? just trust God, okay. Well, what do I do with that? So let's think for a moment, like,

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How do we actually trust God when we're tired, when we're exhausted, when we're overwhelmed by all the to-dos, when we're frustrated because so many things are going wrong? How do we remember to rely on Him? And especially when, if we're really being honest, we're kind of used to relying on ourselves. So I want to tell you real quickly about a program that we've developed called Hope Renewed.

and it actually releases tomorrow, although if you're listening to this right when it releases, I'm gonna give you some early access. In Hope Renewed, we are going to walk teachers through over five weeks what we're calling the Hope Renewed Pathway. And these are steps that we're gonna take to help us actually rely on God and get to that point where we stop feeling defeated and face each day with hope. So in week one, we are going to find security.

What I mean by that is we're gonna discover why we can trust God no matter what. There are some key holdups that sometimes keep us from trusting God. And sometimes we wouldn't even say them out loud, but they're in our subconscious. We're actually wondering, is he actually good? Is he actually in control? Like, you know, why am I facing all these? Why are good, bad things happening to good people? All these types of questions, we're gonna face them head on and kind of learn why is our God worthy of our trust? And kind of...

get rid of some of those even subconscious questions and fears. So that's in week one, step one, find security. Step two is build trust. We're gonna create habits that help us trust God and his promises. And this takes two weeks. Week two is actually about lament. If that's something that you haven't really learned about or experienced, learning to lament with God over things that are hard and difficult in our lives is so...

I don't know what word to even use. It's so helpful because it's embracing that emotion instead of just trying to push it off and working through it with God. It

really just helps process difficult things and difficult emotions and be able to move forward. So lament, we'll talk about in this category. And then we'll also talk about specific habits that we can put in our life to actually help us remember to trust God and remember to rely on him and not fall back into just

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you know, kind of our patterns of just forgetting that he's in there and forgetting to depend on him. So number one, finding security in week one. Number two, building trust in weeks two and three. And then weeks four and five, finally, we will overcome obstacles. So we, in this case, we've built some good habits. We know we can trust God. We've built these habits. We're gonna tackle difficulties that can threaten and weaken our hope. So some of the things that we tackle in weeks four and five, we talk about what to do with

being so exhausted and overwhelmed, how to handle that, both from a practical and a mindset standpoint. Then we also deal with common challenges that we face, things like, what do I do if I feel like I'm a failure? If I'm dealing with difficult people? And just kind of some other common challenges that we see on a regular basis and that you're having to deal with on a regular basis.

So yeah, worrying about things you can't control, things like that. So finding security in week one, building trust in weeks two and three, and then overcoming those obstacles in weeks four and five. What this program, just to be clear, is not going to do is it's not necessarily going to change your circumstances, okay? But what it is going to do is help you weather those challenges without feeling anxious.

and without feeling discouraged. It's gonna help you truly trust God, not just use it as a catchphrase and rest in his perfect plan and to be able to face each day with hope rather than feeling defeated. I think by the end of this program, you'll be a calmer teacher who smiles a lot more. And if you have been daydreaming about quitting, my prayer is that those daydreams will stop and you'll actually be able to look forward to coming to work because you know that's exactly where God has you.

So if you're interested in finding out more about Hope Renewed, I don't want to spend too much time talking about it here. You can get all the info at teachfortheheart.com/slash/hope-renewed. But real quick, just to share with you, this is not a huge time commitment because we know you're busy and we know you're overwhelmed. So the way that we designed it is all you need is four days a week, about 15 minutes. And what you're going to do in that is a very brief Bible study and then a short video, typically around eight minutes.

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and then an application question. So it's designed to be able to be done in, yeah, about 15 minutes. And if you have a regular devotional time, it would absolutely be appropriate to do this during then, because as I said, it's Bible study and meditating on these types of truths in your life. So we made it, we wanted to make it really practical, short, so that it will fit into your day, but really getting right to the point. We don't waste any time. We just get right to the point and to the things that we think are really gonna help you.

stop feeling defeated and face each day with hope. So once again, this program actually technically releases tomorrow, but we're gonna go ahead and give you early access if you're listening. You can go to teachfortheheart.com slash hope renewed. And right now we are offering, this is the first time ever doing this. And so we're giving a special discount 40 % off if you use the coupon code hope. That is a limited time availability. So if you're listening now, go ahead and check that out, use it before it expires.

But teachfortheheart.com slash hope renewed, use the coupon code HOPE at checkout to save 40%. We really did not want finances to be an obstacle to being able to join in for. We're also having a free training if you're listening today, tonight, where we're gonna kinda take a lot of things we talked about in this episode and just dive a little bit deeper into that. So if you are interested in that as well, you can go to teachfortheheart.com slash HOPE.

Well, thank you guys so much for being here. It was a pleasure to speak with you today. And I do hope that some of you will be able to join us and hope we're new where we can dive into all of these things much more fully. This episode was brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. All views and opinions are our own and don't necessarily reflect those of the Herzog Foundation. If you'd like the links that we talked about or just anything in this episode to be able to review it, you can go to teachfortheheart.com slash 335.

Well, thanks again for being with us. I look forward to speaking with you again soon. In the meantime, teach you remember, God is at work in you and through you, and he's using you to make a difference. Keep your eyes on him and teach for the heart.